

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.121 as follows (see the accompanying "marked up" version pursuant to 1.121):

1. (Amended) An absorbent article comprising:

a main body including a liquid-pervious top sheet, a back sheet and an absorbent core sandwiched between the top sheet and the back sheet;

a layer containing a skin-protective ingredient; and

a support layer for covering an ingredient-containing layer, the ingredient-containing layer and the support layer being provided on a surface of the main body to be in contact with skin of a wearer, wherein;

the solubility in water of the support layer is promoted at 25°C or higher, and/or the moisture absorbability or the solubility in water of the support layer is promoted at a relative humidity of at least 30 %.

3. (Amended) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,

wherein the layer containing a skin-protective ingredient is formed of a compound capable of forming an oily film on the skin of the wearer.

5. (Amended) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 3,

wherein the layer containing a skin-protective ingredient is formed of at least one compound selected from the group consisting of liquid polyisoprene, squalane,

pristane, ozocerite, ceresine, microcrystalline wax, polyethylene powder, liquid paraffin, VASELINE™, and paraffin.

7. (Amended) The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, which further includes a leak-preventive cuff for preventing side leakage and/or a leg cuff for preventing leakage through the area around the wearer's thighs, and layer and support layer are located on a surface of the leak-preventive cuff and/or the leg cuff.